

# On the Go

Rideshare News for Southern California Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs)

July/August 2014

News for Your Employees

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## Welcome to *On the Go*

We're pleased to present the premiere issue of *On the Go*, the revamped e-newsletter for rideshare professionals—bringing you the latest news, program updates, advice, marketing ideas, and more.

*On the Go* comes to you via email every other month (with a monthly 1-page version for employees) and is a service of Los Angeles Metro, Orange County Transportation Authority, San Bernardino Associated Governments and Ventura County Transportation Commission.



## Award-Winning Ideas for Your Rideshare Program

**Looking for something new for your rideshare program? We've got ideas so winning, they were honored at this year's Rideshare Diamond Awards:**



At Irvine Ranch Water District, ETC Jane Larson promotes the rideshare program via bulletin boards and emails, and she also makes a point to **announce rideshare news at the all-staff meetings**. She reaches a lot of people because, as she puts it, "it helps to have a captive audience."

Oakley had plenty of long-distance commuters who'd benefit from vanpooling, but varying schedules made forming vanpools challenging. Last year, they **coordinated directly with department supervisors who**

**worked day-to-day with employee scheduling, targeting specific areas until a vanpool was successfully formed.** By doing so, they quickly went from two vanpools to 10.



The Disney Company celebrated Earth Month by posting a company website where employees could pledge to rideshare at least twice every month. **Every pledge triggered a donation** to the National Park Foundation—a real win-win for clean air.

UCLA rewards regular transit riders by giving them **discounted parking**



**on the days they need to drive** in to campus.

Los Angeles World Airports used **free software to map out all their vanpool routes** on an interactive map.

Potential vanpoolers can click on the link and type in their home city to find vans closest to them along with pick-up and drop-off times and other pertinent information.



Childrens Hospital Los Angeles found a clever way to get rideshare

[More >](#)



Next: [Get free telework help ->](#)

[Calendar of Events](#)

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## Award-Winning Ideas... (continued from p. 1)

program participants to recruit their coworkers to ride transit or join a vanpool. The hospital increased the subsidy from \$35 monthly to 50% off the cost of transit passes or vanpool leases—a huge savings for long-distance commuters—only they added a catch.



It was a **one-year pilot project that would only continue if 250 new riders signed on.** Current ridesharers didn't want to lose the new benefit, so they talked it up to their friends. Thanks to word of mouth, the hospital far exceeded its goal.

Wellpoint subsidizes all forms of ridesharing, offering \$25 to \$35 monthly, which is a big incentive to share the ride. They **don't forget the little gestures,**



though—like giving away freebies they get from local transit companies—to keep the program in

front of employees on a regular basis.

Even though Cal State LA's rideshare group had ideas for improving bicycling options on campus, before they did



anything, **they invited feedback from students and staff.** This not only helped them to invest in the amenities that mattered most, but it gave people buy-in to the changes so they'd help promote the new bicycling program once it was underway.

The Department of Homeland Security USCIS boosted its rideshare rate with one simple strategy: instead of

just putting commuter information in the new-hire packet, personnel **actually pitched rideshare options in person and signed people up on the spot.**



Even though it's said "you never forget how to ride a bike," that doesn't mean people feel confident riding one through city streets to work or campus. UC Irvine addresses this by regularly holding bike commuting training classes that **teach safety, strategies for mixing with traffic, how to find the best route and more.** Not only has it increased the cycling rate overall, but in particular among female staff and students, who are usually a much smaller percentage of the bike commuting population.



**The Diamond Awards honor employer rideshare programs and individuals who go the extra mile to promote commute alternatives to bust traffic tie-ups in Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties.** For the full list of 2014 winners, [click here.](#)

## If You're Thinking of Starting a Telework Program...

There's a new online resource developed with funds from the South Coast Air Quality Management District that can help you put together an effective plan for employees to work at home or off-site. Called Telework SoCal, the website features a free Telework Toolkit, sample case studies, workshops—plus a "Telework Impact Calculator" that can instantly give you your company's estimated savings in miles traveled, gas, emissions, and expenses.



In addition to those savings, other benefits of telework include reduced absenteeism and a boost in productivity. According to Telework SoCal, when implemented correctly, teleworking can result in 10-20% increases in productivity.

Find out more at [teleworksocal.com](http://teleworksocal.com).

### FUN FACT:

The world's longest stretch of carpool lane is right here in Southern California on the 405 Freeway, where ridesharers can travel 70 miles each way—from San Juan Capistrano in Orange County to Sylmar in the North Los Angeles County area.

## Guess Who's Turning 40?

Okay, a fairer question might be: guess *what* is turning 40? The answer: Ridesharing! The nation's first rideshare agency opened right here in Southern California 40 years ago in 1974 in response to gas shortages. Called Commuter

Computer, it began as a group of businesses getting together to develop a database to match up carpools.

It has since evolved into the ridematching systems still in use today and run by the county transportation agencies (the very ones that bring you this newsletter). Of course, the technology is more advanced and the options more varied, but the mission is the same: to help commuters find alternatives to driving alone.

In honor of 40 years of ridesharing, we thought we'd share a few of the highlights in ridesharing over the past four decades...

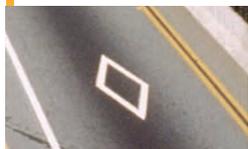
### 1975

Southern California launched its first vanpool fleet, putting 10 vans on the road from outlying areas to mid-Wilshire.



### 1976

Caltrans introduced the first carpool lane on the Santa Monica Freeway. Public outcry over "losing a lane" forced Caltrans to revert it



back and establish a policy to only add carpool lanes vs. converting general use lanes.

### 1984

Los Angeles hosted the summer Olympics, and what was expected to be a traffic nightmare instead became a glimpse of how the region's freeways could be. People carpooled, took transit and stayed home. The roads were nearly empty.



### 1985

Rideshare agencies got together to launch Rideshare Week. A post-campaign study showed that 60% of people who tried ridesharing for the first time during the week continued to share the ride.



### 1988

The South Coast Air District adopted the nation's first "rideshare regulation," known at the time as Reg. XV. It required businesses to offer rideshare programs to their employees.



### 1990

Rail made a comeback in the Southland with the launch of the Metro Blue Line, offering service between Long Beach and downtown LA.



### 1992

Metrolink held its grand opening. Service started with the Ventura, Santa Clarita and San Bernardino lines.



### 1993

Caltrans kicked off Rideshare Thursday, promoting the idea that ridesharing even once a week can help ease traffic.



### 1994

A 6.7 earthquake centered in Northridge shook up commutes, and agencies rallied to help people get where they needed to go.



### 1995

The world's first fully automated toll lanes opened on the 91 Freeway. Carpools with three or more people rode free or at a discount.



### 2008

Gas prices hit an all-time high of \$4.11 a gallon, and phone calls to the regional rideshare helpline rose as people looked for ways to ease sticker shock at the pump.



### 2010

The 511 travel information system launched, allowing motorists to dial 511 from any phone to get local traffic data, carpool help, transit routing and more. Online, they can visit [go511.com](http://go511.com) or [IE511.org](http://IE511.org).



### 2014

Southern California celebrates 40 years of ridesharing. Here's to many, many more!



## New Hope on Tax Breaks for Ridesharers

Potential good news for commuters: the Senate Finance Committee recently met to look at reviving tax breaks that expired as of

Jan. 1, 2014. Among them is one that would allow commuters who ride transit the same tax benefit as those paying for parking—\$250 per month—up from the current cap of \$130.

Also under consideration is allowing a \$20 monthly pre-tax bicycle commuting benefit for people who pay bike-sharing membership fees.

Final action will likely wait until the end of the year and will be effective retroactively if approved for 2014.



## Coming Soon...

Rideshare Week is Oct. 6-10, and it's not too early to start planning events at your work site to help your employees find alternatives to driving alone during the week. If you're thinking of holding a rideshare fair, party or contest, consider attending a workshop or local network meeting to get ideas or to team up with neighboring companies.

Refer to the Calendar of Events listing to find one near you.



## Just How "Bike Friendly" Is California?

According to an annual ranking by the League of American Bicyclists, we're the 9th most bike-friendly state—up from #19 last year.

The bike league looks at factors such as bike facilities, programs that promote bicycling and laws that make it safe and comfortable to ride.

What contributed to the big jump in ranking for California: Caltrans' recent endorsement of the NACTO Urban Streets Design guide which makes recommendations to cities for pro-bike policies, and last year's passage of a law requiring drivers to stay three feet from cyclists (that goes into effect in September).

Washington was named the most bike-friendly state in the US and Alabama the least. To find out more, go to [bikeleague.org](http://bikeleague.org).



## We're #1... Unfortunately

The American Lung Association released its annual *State of the Air* report and clean air "report card," and Los Angeles-Long Beach remains the metropolitan area with the worst ozone pollution in the nation, earning an F. LA has topped the list in all but one of the report's 15 years.

In fact, every city in the Southern California region earned F grades, including Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura.

Last year showed an actual increase in ozone pollution, most likely due to warmer temperatures, according to the report. For the full report, go to [stateoftheair.org](http://stateoftheair.org).



## More People Did *This* Last Year Than Ever

Last year more people rode public transit than at any time in nearly 60 years—reaching 10.65 billion passenger trips—according to data released by the American Public Transportation Association. That beats the previous record in 1956 and more recently a peak in 2008 when gas cost more than \$4 a gallon and 10.59 million trips were taken.

Los Angeles was among cities reporting record ridership, with heavy rail up 4.8% and light rail (Metro Rail) up 6%.

Although some of the bump in ridership can be attributed to an increase in overall population, in the past two decades the transit ridership increase of 37% was well ahead of the 20% growth in population.

For the full report, go to [apta.com](http://apta.com).



### FUN FACT:

511 is the official number in the U.S. for transportation help, and here in Southern California, people can call it for traffic updates, carpool matching, transit routing and more.

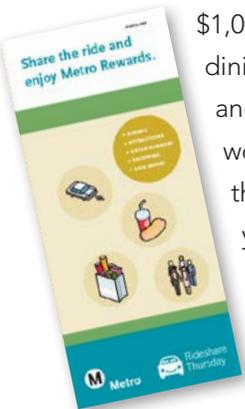


## Los Angeles

### Metro Rewards Coupon Books — Get 'em While They're Hot

If you haven't yet signed up to get free 2014 Metro Rewards coupon books for your employees who rideshare, there's still time!

The books offer more than \$1,000 in discounts in dining, entertainment and shopping near your worksite and are good through the end of the year. To earn a booklet, an employee must rideshare at least eight times a month for three months.



Once they get their coupon book, they can also access online or via a mobile app an additional 100,000 offers nationwide.

"Metro Rewards gives Los Angeles County employers an important tool to help motivate employees to share the ride," says Metro's MaryAnn Garcia. "It's also a way to show your appreciation to your loyal ridesharers at no cost to your company."

For more information about Metro Rewards, go to [metro.net/rideshare](http://metro.net/rideshare).

### Metro Raises Fares, Adds Free Transfers

Metro will raise its bus and rail fares Sept. 1, with the regular fare going from \$1.50 to \$1.75. The cost of a day pass will increase from \$5 to \$7, the weekly pass from \$20 to \$25, the 30-day pass from \$75 to \$100 and the EZ Pass from \$84 to \$110.

However, the new fares will include free transfers for those using TAP cards. Currently, the fare is only good for a single ride on a bus or train, and every transfer is a new cost. For example, a rider who currently rides two buses to reach their destination and pays \$3 (the cost of two \$1.50 fares) would only pay \$1.75 under the new fares as long as the second bus ride begins within two hours.

According to Metro, about half of Metro riders must transfer to complete their trips.

The last fare increase was in 2010, when the single-ride fare was increased from \$1.25 to \$1.50. It is only the fourth fare increase in the 21 years Metro has been operating as an agency.



### Heading to LAX July 25-28?

There will be a full closure of the nearby Century/Aviation intersection that weekend due to the demolishing of the Century Boulevard Bridge. Metro is asking travelers to consider alternate routes, use transit options and plan ahead. For a detour map, visit [metro.net](http://metro.net).

## Orange

### OC Toll Lanes No Longer Take Cash

Be warned: Orange County toll roads no longer have toll personnel accepting cash. SR 73, 133, 241



and 261 now require a FasTrak or ExpressAccount for toll payment.

If you use the lanes without either of these accounts, you have a one-time, 48-hour window to pay after the fact at [thetollroads.com](http://thetollroads.com). If you don't pay within 48 hours, you'll receive a ticket in the mail for a \$57.50 penalty plus the cost of the toll.

Penalty fees are being waived until Labor Day provided toll is paid within 30 days.

This does not affect the 91 Express Lanes, which do not have a grace period and continue to recognize FasTrak transponders only.

### Never Miss a Pitch—Ride the Angels Express

The popular Angels Express special Metrolink train service is back, offering \$7 round-trip fares and taking fans straight to the stadium's parking lot just a short walk away. It runs to all Angels weekday home games that [More >](#)



start at 7:05 p.m. and to every Friday night game on the Inland Empire-Orange County Line.

Plus when you ride you can get 50% off select Angels baseball game tickets. Go to [angels.com/octa](http://angels.com/octa) for the special code to access your discount

## Changes on the 57 Freeway

OCTA and Caltrans recently completed the northern segment of the Northbound 57 Freeway Widening Project. The project added a new 5-mile general-purpose lane from Orangethorpe Avenue in Placentia to Lambert Road in Brea, along with other upgrades.

In addition, sections of the carpool lanes were restriped to allow for continuous access to make entering and exiting the lanes more efficient.

A southern segment of this route is scheduled to be complete later this year, adding a lane between Katella Avenue and Lincoln Road in Anaheim.

Merolink stations in Orange County.

Play along with Seven Summer Treasures to win prizes including Disneyland Resort Park Hopper tickets, Metrolink passes and hundreds of other prizes.

Prizes will be awarded weekly, with more chances to win when you share your adventures on Twitter or Instagram with the hashtag #Metrolink7.

Go to [metrolinktreasures.com](http://metrolinktreasures.com) to enter and for contest details.

## San Bernardino sbX Gets Off to a Fast Start

The new sbX rapid transit got off to a big start, with more than 3,000 rides a day in its first week. The express bus service spans 15.7 miles between the cities of San Bernardino and Loma Linda.



sbX buses breeze past traffic thanks to dedicated bus lanes and the ability for each bus to send a signal at intersections to extend a green light or cause it to turn green earlier.

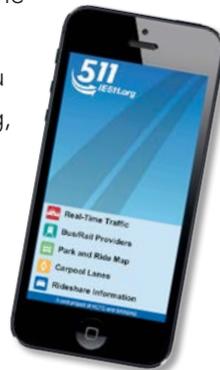
It features 16 stops at key destinations including Cal State SB, Civic Center/Downtown, Inland Center Mall, Loma Linda University and Medical Center at the VA Hospital.

### Some fun facts...

- sbX is the first rapid transit line to operate in the Inland Empire since the Pacific Electric "red car" system in the 1940s.
- Its articulated buses are the first 5-door, CNG, 60-footers ever built.
- Buses include Omnitrans' first interior bike racks, with space for four bicycles.
- sbX accepts the same fares and passes as Omnitrans local route service.
- Stations feature real-time arrival displays, and riders can enjoy free Wi-Fi and power outlets while on board. Find out more information at [omnitrans-sbx.org](http://omnitrans-sbx.org).

## The IE511 App Is Updated

IE511.org, the travel information site for the Inland Empire, has recently updated the Mobile App that allows users to monitor real-time traffic information in Southern California. You can also get bus routing, find a nearby Park & Ride lot or carpool lane, and learn about incentives to make your commute more affordable and so you can "Know Before You Go." Download it at [IE511.org](http://IE511.org).



## An Important Reminder About Call Boxes

In these days of cellphones, it can be easy to forget about those Call Boxes along the freeway. Not all motorists have phones, however, and even those who do can find themselves in an emergency situation without a functioning cellphone—whether they forgot it, the battery has run down or it's not getting service. [More >](#)



## Seven Summer Treasures

OC Metrolink has mapped out cool places for you to discover at seven special spots within easy reach of



That's why more than 1,200 Call Boxes in San Bernardino County continue to be maintained and serviced. "Whether you're having car trouble or would like to report an emergency such as accident, fire or medical, a Call Box operator will take your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week," says Kelly Lynn with San Bernardino Associated Governments. "We want to get the word out that these continue to be an important resource for Inland commuters."

Call Box operators assist motorists by calling an auto club, a friend or a family member. If an emergency is being reported, the Call Box operator will transfer the call to the California Highway Patrol as quickly as possible. There is no charge for using a Call Box.

"Remember when using a Call Box to make sure you are in an area where you feel safe and that your vehicle is completely on the right shoulder and out of traffic," adds Lynn.

If you have questions or would like more information, call Kelly Lynn at 909.884.8276 ext 140.

## Ventura

### Ventura County ETC Manual

Ventura County ETCs now have a great new resource: the Commuter Services Employer Resource Manual, which includes everything you need to know to run a rideshare program at your worksite.

Available free online from Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), the manual includes:

- Detailed information about alternative commuting options
- Information about the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District's Rule 211
- Commute tax benefits
- Employer resources
- eRideGuide
- The Guaranteed Ride Home program
- Help with ridematching and reporting

You'll also find "how-tos," sample forms and tips for conducting a transportation survey of your employees.

Download it at [goventura.org](http://goventura.org).



### Biking Got Bigger

Thanks to the employers that helped promote Bike to Work Week in Ventura County, more bicyclists participated than ever before. Online pledges increased by more than half, and attendance at Pit Stop events rose a whopping 71%.

Bike Week is an annual event in May that promotes two-wheeled commuting as a zero-emission, low-cost alternative to driving.



### Visit VCTC at the County Fair



Avoid parking hassles and take the bus to the Ventura County Fair July 30-Aug. 10. While you're there, be sure to stop by the VCTC booth to say hello, and get free goodies and information about local transit and services.

### Are Your Employees Affected by US-101/SR-23 Construction?

VCTC can provide your worksite with a no-cost information booth to help your employees find alternative forms of transportation to avoid traffic tie-ups during construction. They'll bring all the supplies, giveaways and materials needed.

The US-101/SR-23 construction project is expected to continue until 2016.

Contact Alan Holmes at 805.642.1591, ext. 119.

Updates are at [toaks.org/10123](http://toaks.org/10123).



### Student Art Winners

Look for VISTA buses featuring designs from the Teen Council art contest winners, currently on VISTA Coastal Express, 101 and 126 routes.



## Calendar



**ACT International Conference** is Aug. 2-6 in San Francisco, CA, where you can network with roughly 400 ETCs from Southern California and nationwide and learn from industry leaders, [actweb.org](http://actweb.org).

**Orange County Transportation Authority will hold a Rideshare Week kickoff** and marketing certificate workshop in late August at OCTA offices in Orange; OCTA will notify employers of specific date and time.

**California Rideshare Week** is Oct. 6-10. Your county rideshare agency offers support to employers running a Rideshare Week campaign at their worksites, including marketing support, outreach and a chance for participants to win prizes. Look for more information in the next issue of this newsletter, or contact your local agency (see contact info, right)

### Network Meetings

**Glendale TMA** meets regularly; call 818.543.7641.

**Inland Empire Commuter Services** offers bi-annual meetings for ETCs in the Inland Empire ; call 1.866.IECS4HELP.

**Orange County Network** meets regularly; email [sharetheride@octa.net](mailto:sharetheride@octa.net)

**Pasadena TMA** meets every other month; call John Miranda at 818.354.7433.

**Santa Monica ETC Network** meets regularly; call 310.458.8956.

**South Bay/Westside TMA** meets monthly; contact Christina Corrales at 310.642.0066, email [christina\\_corrales@equityoffice.com](mailto:christina_corrales@equityoffice.com)

**Torrance Transportation Network** meets regularly; call Kim Fuentes at 310.784.7902

**Warner Center TMO** meets monthly; call 818.716.5520.



### Training

**Metro Rideshare** upcoming briefings—where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process and services Metro has to offer—are July 16, 9:30–11:30 a.m. and Aug. 20, 1-3 p.m. at Metro offices in downtown Los Angeles. To reserve your space, email [garciana@metro.net](mailto:garciana@metro.net). For the full 2014 briefing schedule, [click here](#).



**South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD)** offers one-day ETC training for \$166.59. Upcoming sessions are July 23 and Aug. 13 at AQMD offices in Diamond Bar and Aug. 27 at Metro offices in downtown Los Angeles. Contact the AQMD's training program at [etctraining@aqmd.gov](mailto:etctraining@aqmd.gov) or visit [aqmd.gov](http://aqmd.gov).

### ON THE GO

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For subscription information or to change your ON THE GO e-mail address, contact your representative at the rideshare office nearest you.

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Mailing address:

PO Box 14184, Orange, CA 92863  
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**Ventura County**

Transportation Commission  
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[CommuterServices@goventura.org](mailto:CommuterServices@goventura.org)

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**Commuter Information 511**

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Riverside/San Bernardino counties